

RECEIVED IN CHAMBERS OF
U.S.D.J. DEARIE
ON: 6/13/22

Mr. Brandon Holmes

760 Eldert Lane

Brooklyn NY 11208

June 5, 2022

Chamber of the Honorable District

Judge Raymond J Dearie

Eastern District of New York

225 Cadman Plaza

Brooklyn NY 11201

Re: *US v Lamonte Johnson, courtroom closure*

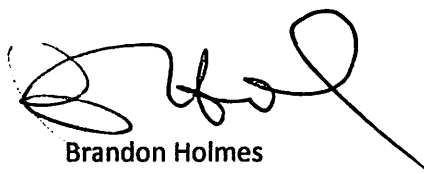
Dear Judge:

I did not know until the hearing on the courtroom closure matter that you would entertain a complaint directly to your chambers in this regard. This is why I complained through the clerk's office and to your personnel when I was tossed from your courtroom on or about the 20th or 23rd of May, 2022. While I will not and cannot deny that **Lamonte Johnson** is a dear friend of mine, I am more offended by the denial of my constitutional right to be present in your courtroom during the trial. With all due respect, moreover, the reduction of this constitutional violation to how much I heard or saw during the trial is "trivial pursuit" at best, and an intentional distraction by the government at worst. I had and have a right to be physically present at the trial because our democracy rests on the sound principle that "bad things happen behind closed doors". Next, before the court was closed to me, alternatives to the closure should have been explored and the reasons for the closure have to be logically tied to a legitimate interest. Covid-19 was the **professed** reason for the closure, but as I said at the hearing, I was never screened for covid before coming into the US courthouse, and most likely the jury was not screened either. The marshals are not doing a screening for covid of **anyone** coming in. Thus, we suffered the absurd consequence of a closed **Lamonte Johnson** trial to socially distance a jury that was never screened for covid coming into the building. And if virtual trials or relegating spectators to "viewing rooms" is the norm without any legitimate basis, then there would be no need to use covid as an excuse or justification.

Lastly, I spoke with defense counsel **White** after the hearing and he explained to me that a request was made to use the ceremonial courtroom for the trial in this matter, but that another defendant was

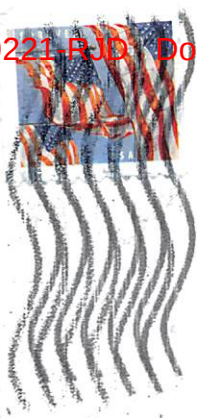
already scheduled for trial in such ceremonial room. I naturally asked how many ceremonial courtrooms could have been made available, and whether or not the trial could have been postponed to allow us access to the ceremonial courtroom for the Johnson trial. Anything except closing the courtroom because to deny us this right to a public trial before threshold questions are answered and reasonable alternatives explored, then to reduce the central question to how much I heard or saw after denial of this most sacred, democratic right, is to belittle the constitutional right to an open trial.

Very Truly Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Holmes', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Brandon Holmes

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